

PRESS ADVISORY

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A senior defense official will conduct a background briefing on Secretary of Defense Perry's upcoming trip to the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, Tuesday, March 15, following the regularly scheduled 1 p.m. DoD brief. The DoD Public Affairs point of contact is Major Bob Potter, (703) 697-5131.

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USIA FOREIGN PRESS CENTER BACKGROUND BRIEFING

TOPIC: DEFENSE SECRETARY WILLIAM PERRY'S UPCOMING TRIP TO
RUSSIA, KAZAKHSTAN, BELARUS AND THE UKRAINE

ATTRIBUTION: SENIOR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL

MODERATOR: BOB EDGERTON, DEFENSE DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER

4:00 P.M. EST, TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 1994

MR. EDGERTON: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Foreign Press Center. I am Bob Edgerton, the DOD liaison officer here at the Foreign Press Center.

This is a background briefing for attribution to senior Defense Department officials. I would like first to introduce you, however, to +++++. They will make some brief comments and remarks focusing on Secretary Perry's forthcoming trip to Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. And then they will respond to your questions. I will recognize the questioners. When you take the microphone, please as a courtesy identify yourself by name and the news media organization you work for.

Welcome again. I repeat, this is a background briefing attributed to senior Department of Defense officials.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: Good afternoon. As most of you know, tomorrow Secretary of Defense Perry will be leaving on a week trip to four of the former Soviet states with whom the Pentagon has a high degree of interaction on a regular basis. We'll be traveling to Moscow first, then to Almaty and Kazakhstan, then to Kiev and finally to Minsk.

Let me suggest to you that, if you haven't seen Secretary Perry's speech which was delivered yesterday at George Washington University, it is the definitive statement of his views on our policies toward the former Soviet Union as we set forth on this trip. And I'd like to underscore several points of that speech for you.

First is that American policy toward the states of the former Soviet Union is a clear policy that pursues our interests, and the interests that Secretary Perry laid out yesterday are guaranteeing the safety of the enormous nuclear arsenal that is the lethal legacy of the former Soviet Union and bringing about reductions in that arsenal.

Second is preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Third is maintaining regional stability in and among the nations that formerly made up the Warsaw Pact.

And fourth is avoiding a return to an antagonistic global rivalry.

I notice that someone's signaling in back. Do we need to --

Q: That's my boss.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: All right.

And, indeed, I would suggest that in looking at those four interests they coincide closely with the security interests of the states that we will be visiting. Denuclearization,

counterproliferation, regional stability and avoiding a reemergence of a global rivalry are shared interests with Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus.

On our trip we will be developing joint programs with those four countries that assist them in achieving their national security objectives while at the same time advancing our own. These programs are, in the view of Secretary of Defense Perry, the building blocks of an emerging partnership with these states and, in particular, with Russia.

Let me highlight to you a number of the programs that we will be discussing during our trip, and then later in this conversation if you'd like to discuss them in more specific detail we can.

The Nunn-Lugar program, which is funded out of the defense budget because it is literally defense by other means, supports the cooperative reduction of nuclear threats. We'll be working on efforts to halt proliferation and working specifically to integrate the states of the former Soviet Union into a non-proliferation regime. We will be working to expand a network of defense and military cooperation programs which we now have in place with all four countries. We will be working aggressively to pursue a defense conversion initiative, which Secretary Perry has launched in all four states. We will be pursuing our regional security agenda and a discussion of the Partnership for Peace initiative. We will be discussing arms control initiatives, including START. And, finally, discussing in general defense issues as they pertain to defense budgeting.

I'll turn it over now to +++++, who will talk in some more specific detail about the trip.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: There will be two major strands to the trip. The first and structure would be a more traditional secretary of defense trip to major counterparts. He will meet with the ministers of defense, ministers of foreign affairs, other senior officials in each of the four countries. The agenda of those discussions, however, will be quite different from what it's been in the past. +++++ has already outlined the kinds of issues we'll be discussing: the progress of existing Nunn-Lugar programs in each of the four countries, future plans for Nunn-Lugar projects; implementation of START I reductions, to include the commitments by Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to eliminate nuclear forces from their territory; regional security issues to include Partnership for Peace, nonproliferation concerns across the board. And up until a few years ago, the only item in that list that would have been on the secretary of defense's agenda in the Soviet Union probably would have been nonproliferation, but even that is being addressed in quite a different way. That was always an area of somewhat shared interests between the United States and the Soviet Union, but now it is increasingly one of active cooperation, just one example we are working with with all four states in helping them develop independent, effective export control systems of the type appropriate for democratic societies.

As part of that general trip agenda, Secretary Perry will also be making three visits that would not have been typical in times past. First he will visit the Pervomaisk ICBM base in Ukraine, the site of the deactivation warhead removal from SS-19 and SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles. So he will

observe, for example, an SS-24 from which the missiles have been removed, seeing the implementation of the trilateral agreement in action.

In Kazakhstan we hope to visit the Baikonur space launch facility -- again, a territorial symbol of an area that used to be of great competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, and now we are discussing with Russia and with Kazakhstan ways in which we may cooperate in the important area of space launch.

Third, he will be visiting -- meeting with the joint session of the foreign and defense committees, foreign affairs and defense committees of the Russian Duma. Again, not a usual action.

The second major strand of the trip will be meetings of the bilateral defense conversion committees with each of the four countries. In the case of Russia, this will be the second meeting of the committee, the first having been held in November. In Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, it will be the inaugural meetings. The committees are co-chaired on our side by Undersecretary of Commerce Barry Carter. We have already signed with Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan statements of principle by which the two sides agree on the overall work of the defense conversion committees. We expect to do so in Belarus during next week's trip to Minsk.

But what is more important, that the primary focus of the committees' work will be to advance significantly our agreement on concrete projects for U.S. assistance to defense conversion in the four states, to include both conversion of industries formerly involved in the production of weapons of mass destruction and also frequently some issues such as housing for demobilized military personnel. They're both defense conversion, probably different types, but the main purpose is the same.

So that is the basic outline of the trip.

MR. EDGERTON: Okay, we'll be your questions, and I remind you, please identify yourself and your news organization.

Q: Savas Suzal from Turkish daily Sabah. My question, not completely about the trip, but the subject about the Russian behavior. Usually, generally, the Russian officials they are mention about the near abroad policy, which somehow is the continuity of the Soviet Union, to put the force nearby one of your NATO allies in Turkey. What is your reaction? Do you plan to talk about this policy which today's Washington Times also published a report -- Russian foreign minister, Mr. Kozyrev's statement he mentioned about the same policy also. What is the -- do you plan to discuss this subject in this trip also?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: As I mentioned, the Partnership for Peace initiative will be an important dimension of our conversations in each capital -- in each of the capitals that we will visit. And let me say that we believe that the Partnership for Peace offers the states of the former Soviet Union a vehicle for building a security relationship with NATO, and that Russia will make a choice about whether it wants to be integrated into that security framework. We hope it will be. We are working to ensure that it will be, and we hope that will be a framework within which we can resolve problems. We recognize that Russia has its own interests, especially in the region of the former Soviet Union, and what is important to us is that it pursue those

interests within a framework of respect for international norms. And we believe that Russia can play a very constructive role. Our recent experience in Bosnia indicates that the Russians do play an important role that can be consistent with our interests and that we can work within a cooperative framework.

Q: Thank you. I am Vladimir -- (inaudible) -- working with the Izvestia newspaper from Moscow.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: It's nice to meet you.

Q: My pleasure. Thank you very much for your knowledge you shared with us. What would be the main reasons how Mr. Perry is going to explain dramatic changes in military concept if you compare that with what Mr. Les Aspin expressed? The main concept was that the threat from Russia is going to reduce. Now we see that the approach is every different, that it's quite possible that the military threat from Russia would, you know, reconstitute. Is that correct?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: No, that's not correct.

Do you want -- shall I try this initially -- consistency of policy?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: Either way.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: I mean, I think the important thing is -- and you need to read Secretary Perry's speech very carefully -- there is absolute continuity in our policy in this regard. And Secretary Perry yesterday discussed the best scenarios in which we work cooperatively, and he also acknowledged it is possible that there could be a worst-case scenario, but he did not say that it is likely, and that's an important distinction to make. We must prepare for the worst even as we do everything possible to advance the best.

Do you want to elaborate on that?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: Well, I think if I could use an example from the nuclear arms reduction process, an area of very definitely shared interest between both sides, but where we have agreed in the START process that with the START II treaty each side can only undertake those reductions if the other did. And we needed the certainty and the predictability of the treaty to be able to reduce our strategic arsenals as deeply as START II will call for. Both sides recognize that. Both sides agreed on that.

At the same time, several months before the conclusion of the START II treaty, we also agreed that we could each safely reduce our short-range nuclear forces via unilateral reciprocal actions. And so we were very much engaged in a shared enterprise of deciding where we needed the certainty and predictability of a treaty, where we could act less formally. It's been true for some years. It remains true.

Q: Yes. I'm Vladislav Dropko (ph) from Russian newspaper Pravda. I have two questions, one very short. Can you tell us what part of the Nunn-Lugar funds already appropriated in the year 1992 have been already spent on nuclear disarmament?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: The program of -- this is the third year of the program, and the first two years was \$800 million total. The signed agreements of the commitment of those funds with the recipient countries is totaled just about \$790 million. So virtually all of the first two-year allotment has been committed. And --

Q: How about spent?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: For us, the signature of an

international agreement is a solemn commitment. The actual expenditure of funds, the delivery of the equipment, has a certain time lag obviously from the signature of the agreement, but that process is well underway now. Equipment is being -- for the dismantlement of Strategic Forces is being delivered in Russia and Ukraine as we speak. And, of course, we're talking to the four governments about the new programs using our FY '94 money.

Q: And the second question is: What is the assessment in the Pentagon of the new Russian military victory? There was a lot of criticism in the Congress concerning this doctrine of possibility of Russian involvement in the near abroad and other places. What is the present position of the leadership of the ministry of defense -- the Department of Defense concerning Russian military doctrine?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: This will be a subject for discussion during the meetings in Moscow, and I wouldn't want to comment at this time.

Do you have any --

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: No, I don't.

Q: I'm Meniya Geliva (ph), Macedonian television. Will the issue of peacekeeping forces on the Balkans arise during this trip, especially American presence on the Balkans? And Russian, of course, in Bosnia -- Russian soldiers?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: Certainly the issue of Bosnia, which has been a subject of a number of telephone conversations between Secretary of Defense Perry and Russian Minister of Defense Grachev, will be on the agenda. In addition, we will be discussing peacekeeping more generally. There is a proposal, as you know, from the Georgians that there should be U.N. peacekeeping troops in Georgia. That will be a subject for discussion.

Q: What about peacekeeping soldiers in Macedonia?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: As I said, we will have a general discussion about policy in the Balkans with Minister of Defense Grachev and others.

Q: Can you tell me, please, when these 200 additional soldiers -- American soldiers will be deployed in Macedonia?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: This is not my subject area. We are responsible for policy toward the former Soviet Union. You would need to have a briefing with the people who handle that issue.

MR. EDGERTON: Anyone else?

Q: Suzal from the Turkish daily Sabah again. We saw the same magazine which published in Moscow very close to the Yeltsin government. They mentioned -- the magazine mentioned about that -- one of the articles said that some of the Russian generals and some of the -- part of the Yeltsin administration, they have a very close contact in the PKK, a Kurdish terrorist organization which is very active in Turkey. Do you have any kind of subject which will be discussed in the terrorism, world terrorism or this kind of issue, in Moscow when you will contact the Russian officials?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: It is possible. I have not seen the article that you're referring to, so I don't know about the specifics of it.

Q: The Russian magazine's name is -- means (Is the Future

Ours ?) or something like that, I believe.

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: We do have broad-ranging discussions, and as +++++ said, this is one of the remarkable developments of the post-Cold-War period, that we talk about a wide range of issues that were never on the agenda before. But I can't speak specifically to that point.

Q Andrej Demskij (sp), Kommersant Daily, Russia. I have two questions. One: After the visit of President Kravchuk to Washington, there were reports from Kiev that removal of warheads might be linked with energy supplies from Russia. What is the attitude of the Pentagon towards this position?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: Of course, the trilateral agreement is, in our view, an excellent example of an agreement where all sides win, and that calls not just for the removal of warheads from Ukraine, but the United States will do its part through Nunn-Lugar assistance in helping Ukraine with that process, and Russia agrees to provide Ukraine with fuel for nuclear power reactors as the warheads are removed to Russia for dismantlement. And then, of course, the other main element are the security assurances which the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia will provide after Ukraine adheres to the Nonproliferation Treaty.

So the trilateral agreement has a very positive linkage between warhead removals and Ukraine's energy needs, and we believe the trilateral agreement should be smoothly implemented by all sides and have every reason to expect that it will be.

Q: In the mentioned article by Minister Andrey Kozyrev, it was said that Russian arms export should be -- not should be reduced and should be on the same level. Will this be a matter of discussion during Mr. Perry's trips?

SR. DEFENSE DEPT. OFFICIAL: I expect the question of global arms sales will be a matter of discussion. It is certainly a concern from the proliferation side, the proliferation of dangerous weapons. It's also one of our main interests in defense conversion, and then a shared interest on both sides is to give Russia and the other states alternatives to military production so that arms sales, for example, would not have the same economic importance to those societies as they might otherwise have. It will undoubtedly be a subject of conversation from several different perspectives.

MR. EDGERTON: Are there any other questions?

On behalf of the Foreign Press Center, I would like to say thank you to +++++ and +++++ for joining us here today at the Foreign Press Center. And I remind you one more time, please, that the attribution is to senior Defense Department officials.

Thank you very much for coming.

Q: Thank you.

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